

May 20, 1999

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Dockets Management Branch
Food & Drug Administration
Dept. of Health & Human Services
12420 Parklawn Drive, Room 1-23
Rockville, MD 20857

Re: Docket # 98P-0203-CP

Dear Sir/Madam:

We are writing to ask you to grant the petition filed to eliminate the forced molting of hens.

As you know, in order to increase the amount of time a hen will lay eggs, the industry practices forced molting.

Although molting is a natural process in which chickens stop laying for 3-4 months, the egg industry prefers to force these animals to endure starvation for up to two weeks, or a diet of nutritionally deficient food and water and light deprivation, in order to bring about a faster molt.

Chickens may lost more than 25% of their body weight and 5% - 10% will die, but the egg industry will get their eggs faster and will have the extra added advantage of manipulating consumer prices.

It is shameful that this industry is allowed to torture animals in this horrific way. Not only is this practice dangerous to the birds, studies have found that salmonella is more prevalent in flocks upon whom forced molting has been inflicted. If you care little about the birds' suffering, at least consider the danger this poses to humans and stop the egg industry from continuing to put the lives of chickens and people in jeopardy.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Susan & Hubert van Wyck

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24 Iron Mountain Road
Kent, CT 06757

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